

LEIGHWAY ISSUE 57 SUMMER 2018



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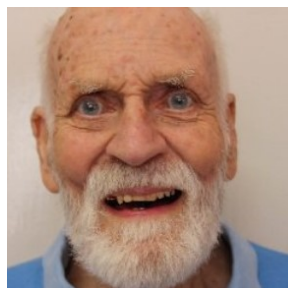
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Articles for Leighway are always welcome. Please email to Carole at carole.mulroney@btinternet.com or send to Carole at 83 Southsea Avenue, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 2BH

DONALD FRASER



It is with great sadness that we have to inform members of the passing of one of our longest serving and most devoted members, helpers and treasurer, Donald Fraser.

Donald worked for many years in the Heritage Centre and was an absolute joy to listen to with all his knowledge of Leigh stretching back over his 90+ years. For many years he 'did the books' for the Heritage Centre with great diligence and accuracy, no doubt learned from his many years working at the Bank of England where he was well respected for these attributes.

Many of you will know Donald perhaps not by name but by the fact he could always be seen around Leigh in shorts and sandals whatever the weather—a hardy soul indeed.

Donald was one of the original members of Leigh Town Council when it was formed in 1996 and served faithfully until earlier this year. He was also a staunch member of the Church at St Clement's and later at St Margaret's. We will miss him terribly, in particular his sense of humour, concern for others, determination and integrity at all times.

2018 DIARY DATES

Our meetings (marked with *) are held at the **COMMUNITY CENTRE IN ELM ROAD - PARKING AT REAR. Entry £2 members £3 visitors, commencing at 7.30pm**

3 September—commemoration of Merchant Navy Day at Strand Wharf—keep an eye out for final details from the Town Council.

12 September—Battlefield Essex—John Debenham and Andrew Summers*

10 October—History of Canals—Bob Delgano*

27 October - British Legion Coffee Morning/Poppy Appeal Launch at the Community Centre

14 November - Essex Fire Brigade Museum*

30 November—Leigh Lights

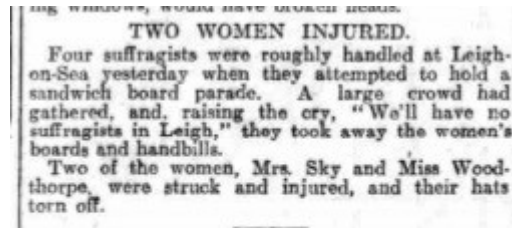
8 December—5 pm Carols on Strand Wharf

DEEDS NOT WORDS

EVA WOODTHORPE—LEIGH'S SUFFRAGETTE

This year has been one of commemoration for women of the 100th anniversary of some of them getting the vote. There have been various events around the country and locally to recognise the great work done by the Suffragist movement and the sacrifices of the Suffragettes themselves.

So what and who was involved locally?



Nottingham Evening Post -
Thursday 27 February 1913



Mrs Sky was a local Suffragette leader very often reported in the local papers, but I was interested in Miss Woodthorpe – a lady of Leigh.

Eva Woodthorpe was born in 1867 one of the 14 children of Lewis and Jane Woodthorpe. Her mother had been Jane Wiseman before her marriage, part of the Wiseman family of Paglesham. Her husband, Lewis was a farmer/fruit grower and sometime auctioneer and the Great Great Grandson of Dorothy Cobbold and William Woodthorpe, Dorothy, as her name suggests being a member of the Cobbold family of brewers in Suffolk.

The females were the dominant gender in the Woodthorpe household – so perhaps this instilled in the 8 girls a sense of their position and status forged in what must have been a pretty lively family. Eva herself referred to it as having a ‘brooding peace’.

Eva was, as a young girl, interested in politics, canvassing for the Conservative Party. By 1898 the family were living in Rayleigh. In 1902 Eva and another woman were summoned for obstructing a footway in Alexandra Street, Southend by wheeling their bicycles on the path. The ladies were fined 5 shillings each.

The family moved around Essex and had a spell in Gloucestershire before settling in Rayleigh. Lewis died in 1910 and by the 1911 census Eva with her mother and sister, Ida, were living at Fanns, Oakleigh Park Drive in Leigh (named after the Woodthorpe ancestral home of Fanns Farm, Aveyley).

By 1913 Eva was treasurer of the local campaigning group of the WSPU but with the advent of the Great War the following year the campaign halted and their energies turned to the war effort.

On 12 May 1915 Eva, in a letter to her niece, told of an adventure a few days earlier when her mother had woken her at 2.45am to the sound of two loud explosions. The alarm hooter went off and with this came enemy aircraft and the blackout was put in place. The family threw a few things together and went to their basement for safety. They could hear the sound of the two zeppelins which flew directly over their house in Oakleigh Park Drive, having just loosed their bombs on Marine Parade, and she described the bombs hitting houses and dropping through from floor to floor setting them alight.

People were out in the streets and the emergency services in cars and on bicycles rushed to the scene. The bombing was over in half an hour leaving one woman in Southend burnt to death in her bed (Mrs Whitwell) - her husband survived but was badly burnt.

Eva's niece, May Blomefield, later wrote of her "Of all my aunts, Eva was the most like Mother and the nearest to her in age. Gifted and clever, she was an ardent supporter of Women's Rights in the early years of the century, and a Militant Suffragette proud to have been both injured and imprisoned for her activities in the "Cause". She was keenly interested in politics and spent much time canvassing for the Conservative Party Candidate at the elections in the borough of Southend until she and her sisters moved to Braintree after their Mother's death"

It is clear that Eva was well respected but as a ranking officer in the WSPU her approval rating in some quarters would have been low and militant suffragettes were considered dangerous and a threat to society.

I can find no records of Eva's activities after the War but I have no doubt she continued to campaign for the vote for which came in piecemeal in 1918 and was not for all women over 21 until a decade later.

Eva never married and after leaving Leigh and lived in Rayne, near Braintree, until her death in 1946.

Carole

THE LEIGH MOB

The Southend Telegraph of 1 March 1913 reported on a meeting of the WSPU to be held at the Séance Hall in the Broadway which had had to be abandoned. A speaker was to have travelled from Scotland but instead a letter arrived to explain the situation.

Dear Mr Editor

*In view of the fact that posters are distributed in this town announcing a meeting in the séance hall on the subject of Votes for Women I am writing to say that the Committee of the Southend and Westcliff Spiritualist Association who holds its religious services every Sunday in that hall has issued a strong protest against the little church being used for any other purpose. Under the circumstances I shall be glad if you will give this letter publication so that any of your readers wishing to attend the meeting on Votes for Women may not be unduly inconvenienced since it will not be held in that building. Thanking you for your attention
Yours faithfully WM Bundle, President*

The Secretary of the Southend Votes for Women party issued a strong protest against a 'mob' who set on a peaceable suffragette gathering at Leigh Post Office. Knocking one lady down, hitting another and tearing their hats off.

She also complained that the police who were fetched did not interfere and adds '*Surely it is time the men of England took some measures to prevent men militanising (sic) against women's bodies whilst they are simply asking for justice*'.

I would hazard a guess that Eva was involved!!!!

Anyone know where the Séance Hall was in the Broadway?

**FLY THE
RED ENSIGN**
FOR MERCHANT NAVY DAY
3rd SEPTEMBER



Leigh Town Council will be holding a ceremony on Strand Wharf to commemorate Merchant Navy Day and will hoist the Red Ensign on the flag pole on the Wharf—keep an eye out for further details.

We are all too well aware of the part our fishing fleet played in global conflicts and this is our chance to honour them as part of the Merchant Fleet.

DEEDS AND WORDS

Do you have the original paper deeds relating to your property. So many of these are being destroyed nowadays, but they contain really interesting details of the original owners of land in Leigh. If we could borrow them and take copies for our archives we would be grateful. Please contact Jennifer and Ed on 01702 712922.

Waterloo House, Leigh Hill - It has often puzzled me as to why this house is named after the Battle of Waterloo when the date on the building is not an anniversary and has no apparent connection with the Battle, the property certainly doesn't date to 1815.—Do You Know?

The Southend Standard of May 9th 1884 reports that Leigh fishing smacks commenced leaving for Harwich that week when 15 boats started to catch red or "Waterloo" shrimps. Is this the answer?

If anyone can throw any light on this I would be interested in knowing.

Jennifer Simpson

JUST TO ADD A BIT OF COLOUR

Peter Wexham, former fisherman, recalls that cochineal was added in the boiler to make shrimps dark pink. Pink shrimps disappeared from the east coast in the 1950s and their disappearance was put down to detergents getting into the water. They were less resistant to this than brown shrimps.

A quick 'google' revealed Waterloo University in Canada (how apt) published an article in 2015 (again a coincidental 200th anniversary of the Battle) about a research project on the bloody red shrimp - the newest invasive species to the Great Lakes.



The species is native to freshwater margins of the Black Sea and travelled from there via commercial shipping ballast water and disrupted the food web in rivers in Western Europe and altered nutrient and contaminant cycles of the environments it invaded. The shrimp has been known to reduce zooplankton biomass and biodiversity — an important food source for young fish and a critical part of the ecosystem.

The bloody red shrimp hides from its predators during the day and comes out at night to feed, which helps it avoid becoming a food source itself. It can travel in large, dense swarms toward the surface. This vertical migration results in the continuous cycling of pollutants such as heavy metals that would otherwise be confined to the bottom of the lake. This may explain their colour, but if it is the same species as that from Leigh it still doesn't explain why they were called Waterloo shrimps.

1918— 100 YEARS ON

As everyone must know by now this year sees the 100th anniversary of the end of hostilities in the Great War although the peace treaty was not signed until 1919.

All over the country in the last 4 years we have been moved, amazed and humbled by the stories which have come to light featuring ordinary people and how they lived and died. during this terrible period in our history.

What we sometimes forget is those that returned to a different world, not necessarily as welcoming as they expected or deserved.

In collaboration with the Community Centre we will be working with friends from the British Legion, Belfairs School and Blade Education involving local schools, to stage a series of displays at the Community Centre in October and November.

On Saturday 27th October the British Legion will be holding a Coffee Morning/Poppy Appeal Launch

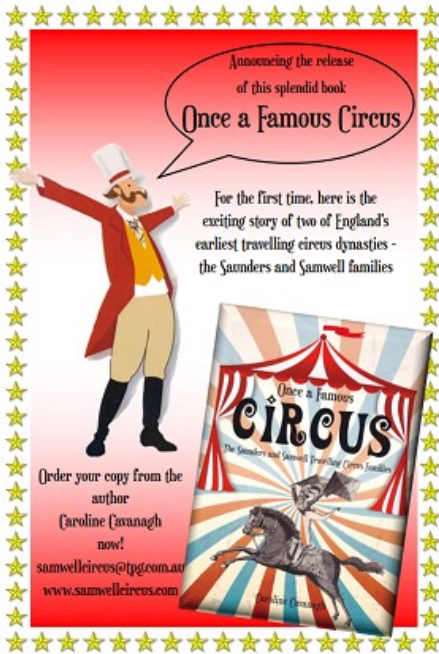
SPEAKERS

JOHN DEBENHAM AND ANDREW SUMMERS BATTLEFIELD ESSEX

12 September at the **COMMUNITY CENTRE** . The writing collaboration of John and Andrew began about 14 years ago and the brand “Essex Hundred” was born. Since then they have written seven books concerning various aspects of the history of our county.

ROGER PICKETT—ESSEX FIRE SERVICE AND THE ESSEX FORE MUSEUM

On 14 November at the **COMMUNITY CENTRE** we are pleased to welcome Roger Pickett as our speaker, who will give a talk on the **Essex Fire Service and the Essex Fire Museum**.



THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY

Over the years in Leighway I have related the story of the 2 daughters of Isaac Partridge who ‘ran away’ to join the Circus. Ann the eldest marrying the owner of the soon to be famous Ginnett Circus which survives today, and Charlotte the younger sister who married John Samwell the foremost equestrian circus rider of his day. Both started dynasties of circus performers.

Now their descendant, Caroline Cavanagh in Australia, has published a book on the history of the Saunders and Samwell Circus families ‘Once a Famous Circus’. It makes for excellent reading even if there were no local connection. Copies can be purchased by contacting Caroline at samwelleircus@tpg.com.au

From their humble beginnings in Leigh the Partridge girls flew the nest into the annals of Circus Royalty.

Carole

LEIGH POST OFFICE (FORMER) - THEN AND NOW

At the moment the address (no 32) Rectory Grove is an empty building. Our former post office, but as the picture on the left shows it was once part of the terrace of houses which we still see further west along the road.

In 1911, which can't be far off when this picture was taken, no 32 was occupied by Abraham Beevor Osborne and his wife Ada Matilda and their 9

They weren't, however, Leigh Osbornes. Both Abraham (an auctioneer's porter) and Ada were London born although Ivy had been born in Leigh.

The picture shows a rather matronly lady in black with what is surely mother and three children. As Abraham and Ada were more or less newly-weds in 1911 so this may not be them.



HEARTH TAX



“In this world nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes”. This is just as true today as it was in the past. In 1662, in the time of Charles II, a property tax was imposed on families depending on the number of fire places in the household. This was the Hearth Tax. In 2012 The British Record Society issued the Essex Hearth Tax Return for Michaelmas 1670 transcribed from original documents.

The entry for Leigh lists 109 names but sadly no addresses. There are two properties with 11 hearths, one belonging to

the widow More, the other to Richard Parker. 24 were exempt including Margareta Emery and Willelmus Osborne. Other familiar names include Goodlad, Haddock, and Salmonde may be the Salmon family and Burdock – the Bundocks.

As with all taxes the Hearth Tax was unpopular and the collectors were sometimes threatened. There was a report regarding Leigh in 1669 when the collector was Eustace Seymour. “Seymour alleged in his disposition that on the previous day he had accompanied the constables of Leigh to collect arrears from a number of householders. Elizabeth Motley had refused to admit Seymour ‘but kept her door shut against the said officers, violently opposing’. Eventually Seymour forced open the door and found a spit standing by the door, which Elizabeth said she would have used ‘to spit Eustace Seymour’. She then seized a knife and rushed upstairs ‘in the chamber into which she had removed and placed her goods, saying if Eustace Seymour offered to go into the chamber, she would kill them all’, after which Seymour decided that it might be prudent to ‘desist’.

The disturbance brought the neighbours out into the yard, including her brother John Osborne, who said that ‘if others were of his mind, Eustace should collect no chimney money’, and that if Seymour had behaved to him in his own home as he had to his sister, ‘he would have made him come short home and the constables likewise’. The Osbornes were clearly a family that resented the tax, because Seymour’s next task was to tackle another brother, Thomas, whose house he approached with John Osborne at his heels, claiming that he would not ‘do at Thomas Osborne’s as he had before at the Widow Motley’s’.

The Hearth tax was repealed in 1688 and replaced by the better known Window Tax in 1696 which continued in force until 1851

Ed and Jennifer Simpson 2018

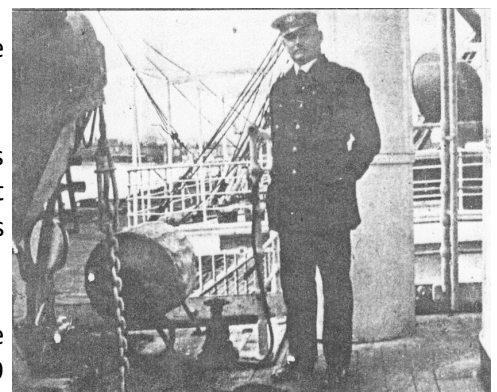
References “Essex Hearth Tax Returns” issued by the British Record Society 2012
 “Leigh-on-Sea A History” by Judith Williams 2002

WHO LIVED IN ELM ROAD IN 1911– PART 1

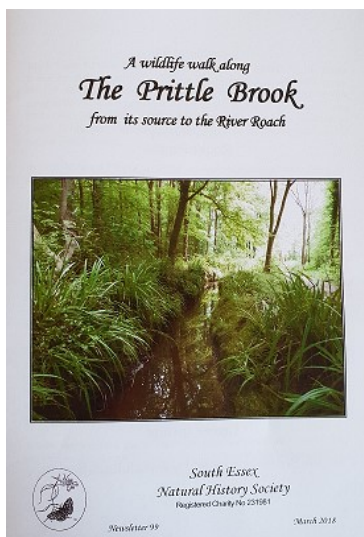
In the first of a series of articles about the inhabitants of Elm Road, Carole tells a tragic tale

In 1911 No 181 Elm Road was inhabited by Gladys Lanser (sometimes shown as Lauser) and her son and daughter, her husband was not present on census night and she was living on private means. She was 35 and was born in Swansea. Gladys had married William Gilbert Lanser, a mariner..

On 24 July 1913 the family, sailed from Liverpool on the White Star Line ship 'Ceramic', emigrating to Australia. They arrived in Sydney on 9 September 1913. Sadly their new life in Australia was to be shortlived and sad as just 6 years later William was lost in a shipping accident. He was Chief Officer of the Warrigal which foundered in a cyclone with all hands off Norfolk Island around 18 March 1919. The incident is recorded in a series of stamps issued by Norfolk Island commemorating local shipwrecks, issued in 1982
 In the subsequent claim for compensation Ida was awarded £500. She never remarried and died in Manly, New South Wales in 1962.



A WILDLIFE WALK ALONG THE PRITTLE BROOK



This is a new publication by the South Essex Natural History Society and gives a complete naturalist's guide to the Brook from its source in the River Roach and is packed full of information about what you can see whilst taking a leisurely stroll along this local natural asset.

The Society also publishes booklets on Hadleigh Great Wood and Belfairs Nature Reserve and played a major part in the preservation of Belfairs in the 1930s.

A similar publication by them will be coming shortly on Belton Hills. If you would like a copy of any of these please contact pjwortley@btinternet.com. You can learn more about the Society at www.senhs.org.uk

THE ORCHARDS EAST PROJECT

Jennifer and Ed Simpson met recently with a representative of this project who is surveying orchards in the parish of Leigh and surrounding areas for the Orchards East Project. The project is lottery funded and is being run by the University of East Anglia (UEA). They hope to stimulate interest and engage a wide range of volunteers in all things about orchards in the Eastern Counties of England. The volunteers are researching the social, cultural and economic history of fruit growing in the region. They are surveying existing orchards, recording where the old orchards were and interviewing people who might have worked in local orchards.



Jenny and Ed looked at the old tithe map of Leigh for 1847 and found that there were orchards at Lapwater Hall, Leigh Manor Farm, Elm Farm and Gowles Farm. They also know from the letters of the wife of Canon King of Leigh in October 1887 that at Leigh Rectory

"we had the apples and pears picked this week, 8 bushels only of the former, so there are none to sell - it was 17 bushels last year, there are a good crop of baking pears." Again in October 1888 she reports *"we have just had all our apples picked and I believe there are 38 bushels. One tree alone had 13 bushels on it. We shall sell about half of them - they fetch 6 shillings a bushel. Altogether Papa says the fruit (including the walnuts) in the orchard will have sold for ten pounds - not bad."* (A bushel was about 48 pounds of apples.)

Through the Project new fruit trees, of Essex varieties, have been planted on the Manchester Drive Allotments in recent years. The Orchards East Project is also offering free trees to community groups. You can look at their website at www.orchardseast.org.uk.

If anyone has any further information about orchards in the area, please let us know. Any background stories about the orchards and market gardens around here would be of great interest.

By the way if you want to know how many trees make an orchard, it's 5.

MARRIED TWICE IN THE SAME SHIRT

In November 1895 it was reported that a certain fisherman (JG) had recently remarried at the age of 80. He claimed to have been married in the same shirt he had worn 53 years earlier at his first wedding.

One would hope it had been washed in between!!!!!!

DREADFUL SOUTHEND HURRICANE—LOSS OF THIRTEEN LIVES BY SHIPWRECK

On Wednesday night, between eight and nine o'clock, Southend was visited by a most tremendous storm of wind and rain, the severity of which has not been equalled for many years, and its effects have been most melancholy and disastrous. Windows were blown in, and slates, tiles, etc., were hurled in all directions. About half-past twelve o'clock the tempest began to subside, and day-break presented to the view, the wreck of no fewer than six boats which had been driven from their anchors, all of which had substantial serious damage, and many were completely destroyed, being driven by the violence of the wind against the wharfs and piles of the pier, until they were not only complete wrecks, but had the appearance of chopped up for fire-wood; such destruction among the boats here was never before witnessed, and the most distressing circumstance is, they were mostly the property of poor hard-working men, who have no other means of subsistence.

*A schooner was perceived early on the same morning, with signals of distress, just below the light-house. A Leigh boat went to her assistance, and put four of her hands on board her; they weighed anchor, and were running for the north shore, the wind blowing strong at the time. A few minutes would have brought her on the sand, but being water-logged, she unfortunately sunk, and every soul on board perished, together with the four men who were in a boat at the stern of the schooner, and it is supposed, from the sudden occurrence, had not time to detach from the ship. This unfortunate catastrophe happened at about half-past nine o'clock in the morning, a short distance from shore, in the presence of hundreds of their fellow creatures, who could not render them any assistance; and after withstanding the fury of the gale during the whole of the previous night. On Saturday, boats from Leigh were in search of the bodies, and succeeded in picking up one of the men, and one of the crew of the schooner. Divers, also, descended to the wreck, and brought up the ship's boat, by which it was ascertained that the ill-fated vessel was the *Brisk*, of London, Captain Fossarn, laden with coals. It is stated by one of the crew of the Leigh boat, that the crew consisted of seven persons, and that a woman and child were on board, making in whole thirteen souls, all hurried into eternity by this melancholy event.*

The names of the Leigh men drowned were, Charles Brady, aged 30; Robert Noakes, aged 24; Henry Wade, 17; and Frederick Fairhead, aged 13.

Times 16 March 1842

The vagaries of wind, weather and water meant that the bodies of the Leigh men were not all recovered immediately and the burial registers for St Clement's show that their burials took place over a period of weeks.

Charles Brady, who left a pregnant wife and 3 children, and Henry Wade were found more or less straight away and both were buried on 17 March

Robert Noakes who had a wife and a new born baby he possibly never saw was not buried at Leigh so he was either not recovered or lies in an unnamed grave elsewhere.

Frederick Fairchild's body is recorded in the parish register as having been found off Shoeburyness and he was not buried until 10 May.

Like the Great Storm of 1987 the hurricane wreaked havoc over all of the country but particularly hit the coastal areas and the 4 brave Leigh men were not the only ones to lose their lives that night.

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the particular author and not necessarily those of the committee and officers of the Society. **We hope you will like to keep your copy of Leighway, but if not please recycle it**

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